

# MRS. AKIKO YOSANO

## JAPAN'S "EMPERESS"

### Poetess, Essayist and Dreamer, Talks of Her Hopes and Ideals.

#### MOST DISCUSSED WOMAN EXCEPT THE EMPRESS

##### Unafraid of Loss of Charm in the Metamorphosis of Her Sex in Orient.

Correspondence of the Associated Press.

TOKIO, July 4.—The woman most talked of in Japan, excepting only the empress, is Mrs. Akiko Yosano, poetess, essayist, preacher to the "common people" and leader of the dramatic Japanese movement to acquire greater rights for womanhood. Both Mrs. Yosano and her accomplished husband are "dreamers" (they call it that themselves), but they are writing every day about life in such a simple and practical way that even the least educated and simplest-minded understand Mrs. Yosano's writings appear in newspapers and magazines through Japan. Her extraordinary versatility is evidenced by her writing classical verse at one moment, insisting on woman's freedom the next and following that with an article on bad manners in street cars.

In a tiny Japanese house tucked away in the heart of the great oriental metropolis, where this poetess and apostle of woman's rights curries on her work, she received a correspondent of the Associated Press. The tinkle of the bell was answered by a young Japanese maid, who prostrated herself on both knees, in Japanese fashion, to welcome the guest.

After the guest, the respondent was escorted to a small reception room upstairs.

Mrs. Yosano came in, accompanied by her husband and by Prof. K. Wada, who acted as interpreter. The poetess, dressed in a simple blue kimono. Her black hair was coiled around her head; not a hair was out of place.

She modestly, almost timidly, extended her hand in formal greeting.

**Parisian Atmosphere.**

The impression of Parisian atmosphere in the pictures and furnishings of the room was justified, for Mrs. Yosano explained that with her husband she had spent some years in Paris and had not only lived in the Latin quarter, but also in the historic district of Montmartre. Her husband had gone to Paris to study a new school of poetry which he called "the poetry of the future." With fervor they had flung themselves into the life of the great French metropolis. She could not resist the temptation to write. For a considerable time she devoted herself to writing of the "poetry of the future." Her works were printed throughout Japan.

She quickly developed a taste for writing upon the practical problems of the fellow woman and it is in this field of effort particularly that she has come to be known as a national figure, taking the lead in the Japanese women's movement which is inaugurated for the betterment of the women of Japan.

The universities of Japan with one exception are not open to women and the few women who are admitted are taken for their country she believes is to open the "gates" of the universities and thus give the woman the opportunity for a higher education and self-development.

**Unafraid of Loss of Charm.**

"I have read somewhere that in America and Europe the economic independence which I seek for our women has caused a certain loss of charm and feminine attractiveness," she said, "but I do not fear such a thing here."

She recalled the doctrine of Confucius which gives to women the inferior place and alluded to the proverb on the subject that "the Chinese are the most obedient of women." She said that she almost every Japanese schoolbook. It concerns the old Chinese idea that when a woman marries she becomes the property of the man. She said that she almost every Japanese schoolbook. It concerns the old Chinese idea that when a woman marries she becomes the property of the man. She said that she almost every Japanese schoolbook. It concerns the old Chinese idea that when a woman marries she becomes the property of the man.

The story is told in this way: Years ago a Chinaman heard his hen crying in the morning and in the usual way. One day while returning from a visit to the emperor the man was killed. The neighbors gathered about the dead hen became symbolic of peril. When the Japanese adopted this tale with the thousands of other Chinese tales that made the hen stand for woman—and so the crying, troubled and revolting woman became the symbol of family disorder and disaster.

Mrs. Yosano did not agree that the predicted evil would follow greater freedom for women. But she said that Japanese women are to be given a fighting chance. She wanted some of the equality which men alone are enjoying. She said that she almost every Japanese schoolbook. It concerns the old Chinese idea that when a woman marries she becomes the property of the man.

**Seeks Western Dress.**

"I want more European houses in Japan for Japanese," she declared, "and I want western dress for women. I think we must come to it. I admit the old court costume for women would please me most, but since we can't have that, let us follow the people of the west."

"I want our food changed, too. We need to strengthen the stamina of our race. We must get into the habit of eating meat. Eternal fish may give us brains, but it will weaken our body. Our body must be made stronger. We are tired, sleepy race, and cannot compare with western races in point of energy or persistence in any undertaking."

She became immensely absorbed in her topic, and continued:

"Are we really lacking in the desire to live, as compared to Europeans? She did not like to believe this to be true, and would prefer to think that the lack is a temporary suspension of desire. The chief reason for this, she believed, is the paucity of nourishment in Japanese food, with the result that the Japanese physique is inferior even to that of the Korean or Chinese. "We cannot expect energy to spring from a bad physique, and it is quite reasonable to assume that this singular lack of desire to make the most of life on the part of the Japanese is due to the lack of nourishment of the body and a deficient education of the spirit."

She went on: "The body and the spirit of the people both impelled to sleep, it is no wonder that they have less power of appreciation, of creation, of understanding and endurance. The people who fall asleep so easily on trains. Naturally, they lack the intellectual ability to study scientific how the cars on which they ride daily are constructed. They can afford to be case without understanding the nature of things half way.

**Temporize to Get Along.**

"They have no attachment for either old or new things. They do not mind in what way they live as long as they can continue to live. They are willing to temporize in order to get along for the time being and will adopt or adapt any old or new thing so long as these things render a temporary service."

It was a pity, Mrs. Yosano thought, that the Japanese are so content with the surface of things and do not seek to penetrate, to delve to the bottom.



## THE INVENTOR—He Loses His Automatic Bird.

WATERMELON IS CLAIMED TO BE OF AFRICAN DESCENT

Nearly all Americans who eat watermelon think of it as a native of the southern part of the United States. They cannot think of the watermelon as an immigrant, so thoroughly has it become Americanized and so harmoniously does it blend with American institutions, American ideals and American customs. It seems that the watermelon must always have lived where the Stars and Stripes fly.

It would be hard to think of the United States, especially the United States in summer, without the watermelon, and millions of them.

It is a popular belief that the watermelon is one of the oldest and therefore one of the most respectable of American plants. They believe that it can trace its vine back to the time long before the first families of Virginia or Massachusetts, Maryland, Pennsylvania or New York, Rhode Island or New Jersey, were founded.

They believe that it was brought to the United States by a Scotchman who was almost broke through our lines. When at last they were brought up and began to retreat, their friend who was home on leave, he saw with the corner of his eye one of the Prussian's hands coming down to his pocket, so he swung around and ran him through and then rushed on.

As he ran he found himself thinking that he had done wrong; perhaps the man meant nothing; perhaps his hand was hit by a bullet—there might be scores of explanations. He might be the thought as running round and round in his head, "I shouldn't have done that. I shouldn't have done that. I shouldn't have done that."

What, then, is this system of Switzerland and is it adaptable to the needs of the United States? Let us see whether compulsory military service is a burdensome tyranny upon this admirable people.

In Switzerland every boy during the summer of the year in which he reaches the age of twenty, reports for military service.

There are depts within convenient reach of his home. He is carefully examined and if he is found to be physically fit he has passed a milestone in his career as a possible defender of his country.

About half of those examined are accepted. It is a recommendation to a lad to have passed these tests and it reflects upon him if he has failed.

Prospective employers take note of success or failure in this test, and since the demand for eugenic parents has come into being the young man who has been shown unfit to serve his country may have difficulty in getting himself a wife.

Every boy hopes above all else to be able to pass his examination with credit. The public schools give setting exercises and call them the "develop the youngsters. There are many military organizations among the boys of the country, and the effect is felt among the youth of the land in its desire to become physically fit.

There also is a mental examination to train them to the test. The boy fails to pass this and he is required to go to night school and make up his deficiencies.

Each young man is given a book in which the results of these tests are set down. This is a mental examination to train them to the test. The boy fails to pass this and he is required to go to night school and make up his deficiencies.

Even the names and younger boys came to grief. Crime always loses.

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